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Paulsboro Train Derailment

Paulsboro, NJ - EPA Region II

POLREP #2

Progress

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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Paulsboro Train Derailment - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY Region II

Subject: POLREP #2
Progress
Paulsboro Train Derailment

Paulsboro, NJ
Latitude: 39.8345751 Longitude: -75.2368212

To: Kelli Lucarino, USEPA Region 02
Keith Glenn, Region 2, ERRD, RPB
Eric Mosher, USEPA, Region 2, ERRD-RPB
Christopher Jimenez, USEPA Region 02
James Daloia, USEPA, Region 2, ERRD-RPB
Judith Enck, EPA
Lisa Plevin, EPA
Marc Greenberg, USEPA
Patrick Digangi, NJDEP
Anthony Carl, NJDEP
fred stroud, EPA ERT
Stephen Blaze, USEPA
James Manuel, NJDEP
Tom Kady, USEPA
Brian Kovak, USEPA-ERT
Elias Rodriguez, USEPA Region 02, PAD
Mary Mears, USEPA, Region 2, PAD
Leah Graziano, ATSDR
Michael Mariano, NJDEP
Chuck Nace, U.S. EPA Region 2
Beckett Grealish, USEPA Region 2, ERRD, RAB

From: Paul Kahn, On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 12/1/2012

Reporting Period: 12/1/2012

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead: PRP	Incident Category:	Removal Assessment
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date: 11/30/2012	Start Date:	11/30/2012
Demob Date:	Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:	State Notification:	
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Transportation Related - Conrail train car derailment

1.1.2 Site Description

1.1.2.1 Location

At approximately 0700 EST on 30 November 2012, 13 Conrail freight cars transporting chemicals and other goods derailed and overturned at a bridge crossing the Mantua Creek in Paulsboro, New Jersey.

The incident occurred near the 200 block of East Jefferson Street. The Department of Transportation reported three cars fell into the creek. Conrail reported one of the tank cars released approximately 180,000 pounds of vinyl chloride into Mantua Creek. Onlookers also reported seeing a vapor cloud rise from the scene.

Mantua Creek is a stream in Mantua Township in Gloucester County. It flows northwest for 18.6 miles to the Delaware River at Paulsboro across from the Philadelphia International Airport. The FAA reports airport operations were unaffected. Mantua Creek is approximately 150 feet wide at the location of the bridge collapse.

The NTSB has been on scene since 1400 hours doing their investigation.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

USCG, NJDEP, EPA and Gloucester County Emergency Response, including HAZMAT, are on scene. Gloucester County Emergency Response initially ordered residents to shelter-in-place. A half-mile radius evacuation zone was also issued for local residents. Paulsboro High School was placed on lockdown at 0715 EST. The school was later dismissed. The Transportation Security Operation Center reports 18 residents reported possible effects from the spill and were placed in a staging area for decontamination.

Vinyl chloride is an industrial chemical described as a colorless gas with a sweet odor and known to be highly toxic, flammable and carcinogenic. It is primarily used in the production of PVC. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, short-term exposure to high levels of vinyl chloride in the air has resulted in central nervous system effects such as dizziness, drowsiness and headaches.

Two VCM cars were directly involved in the accident. One car was pierced and off-gassed approx. half the 24,000 lbs of VCM. Self-refrigeration froze the remaining VCM inside the car. An oil sheen was observed and is attributed to hydraulic fluid from the bridge entering the creek. Hard and soft boom was deployed on the creek by private contractor.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

EPA initiated air monitoring with the TAGA unit based in Edison, NJ. Preliminary results for VCM revealed ambient levels up to 1.3 ppm using actual GCMS results.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

EPA mobilized the ERT mobile TAGA lab with crew to perform real-time air sampling/monitoring. SERAS has also mobilized and has set up eight area RAEs at fixed locations throughout the area, surrounding the location of the derailment. In addition, Region II RST has mobilized three two-person teams to conduct multi-RAE monitoring. Additional rail cars have arrived at the derailment into which the remaining VCM from the ruptured rail car will be transferred. This operation was anticipated to occur at 1700 hours today. At approximately 2200 hours EPA was notified that the transfer will be postponed until 0700 tomorrow morning 12/2/12. When pumping operations occur, the TAGA bus will drive around the area performing real-time monitoring of the immediate area. SERAS and RST personnel will continue stationary and mobile air monitoring as well.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

The PRP is Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail)

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

Waste Stream	Medium	Quantity	Manifest #	Treatment	Disposal

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

EPA will continue to support the air monitoring efforts as requested by the Unified Command.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

2.2.2 Issues

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

No information available at this time.

4. Personnel On Site

No information available at this time.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.